

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: PUBLISHED INTERVIEW WITH UNITA CHIEF

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. SUMMARY. UNITA LEADER JONAS SAVIMBI HAS CALLED FOR ELECTION OF AN ANGOLAN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN LIEU OF A REFERENDUM AS MEANS TO DETERMINE PROVINCE'S FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A FIVE THOUSAND WORD INTERVIEW RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY LUANDA DAILY A PROVINCIA UNITA FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT JONAS SAVIMBI MADE FOLLOWING POINTS (TRANSLATION OF COMPLETE INTERVIEW TO BE POUCHED):

A) UNITA IS ONLY LIBERATION GROUP TO CONTROL AREAS AND PEOPLE, ALBEIT SMALL AREAS AND FEW PEOPLE. UNITA IS SELF-SUFFICIENT, FARMS ITS OWN LAND, PROVIDES LIMITED MEDICAL SERVICE AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPERATES A FEW PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

B) LIBERATION MUST COME FROM INSIDE. THE PEOPLE RESPECT DEEDS, NOT SLOGANS.

C) SAVIMBI QUIT UPA IN 1964 BECAUSE "THEY WEREN'T FIGHTING," CONSIDERED JOINING MPLA BUT RESOLVED TO FORM OWN GROUP (IMPLICATION BEING THEY WERE NOT FIGHTING EITHER.

D) ALL AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN AGAINST UNITA, REFUSED IT AID. LIKEWISE RUSSIANS AND SOCIALIST STATES. ONLY CHINESE AID RECEIVED WAS TRAINING FOR ELEVEN YOUTHS. (COMMENT: UNITA HAS SHOWN SOME IRRITATION OVER BEING LABELED "MAOIST" IN ORIENTATION.)

E) LATE 1970 WHEN UNITA WAS SUFFERING SERIOUS LOSSES AT HANDS OF BOTH MPLA AND PORTUGUESE SAVIMBI RETURNED FROM CAIRO SECRETLY, NOT ONCE ENTERING AN AFRICAN COUNTRY LEGALLY WITH A VISA. HE TOLD HIS TROOPS HENCEFORTH HE WOULD STAY IN ANGOLA UNTIL "SUCCESS OR DEATH."

F) THE ONLY MONEY UNITA HAS EVER RECEIVED FROM ABROAD WAS 1500 POUNDS FROM EGYPT.

G) PORTUGUESE COUP: IT CAME AS A SURPRISE. IN HIS OPINION ORDERLY DECOLONIZATION HERE IS ONLY POSSIBLE IF DEMOCRACY IS CONSOLIDATED IN THE METROPOLE. THE PEOPLE (HERE) MUST BE PREPARED SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY.

H) THE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO BE CONSULTED ABOUT THEIR FUTURE BUT A REFERENDUM IS NOT THE PROPER VEHICLE IN THIS CASE. RATHER PROPER COURSE IS GENERAL ELECTIONS WITH EACH MOVEMENT PUTTING UP CANDIDATES AND A PROGRAM FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHICH WHEN ELECTED WOULD NEGOTIATE WITH THE PORTUGUESE. THUS NO REFERENDUM NECESSARY BECAUSE ELECTION WINNERS (I.E. FEDERALISTS OR THOSE FAVORING TOTAL INDEPENDENCE) WOULD CONTROL ASSEMBLY AND COULD CHART COURSE FAVORED BY MAJORITY WHO ELECTED THEM. NO PARTY, INCLUDING UNITA, CAN CLAIM TO REPRESENT "THE PEOPLE," HENCE THE NEED FOR ELECTIONS.

I) COLOR IS NOT IMPORTANT, ATTITUDE IS. ALL WHO WANT TO BE ANGOLAN ARE ANGOLAN. THERE'S A PLACE FOR EVERYONE. THE EUROPEANS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAVE NO REASON TO BE AFRAID.

J) IT IS POPULAR AND EASY TO DEMAND IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE BUT THIS IS WRONG, IT WOULD CREATE GRAVE PROBLEMS.

K) SAVIMBI APPEALS TO GEN SPINOLA TO CLARIFY THE ROLE OF "PERSONS OF GOOD INTENTIONS" (LIKE HIMSELF) IN THE EVOLVING SITUATION.

L) WITH THE NEW FREEDOM OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATION SAVIMBI URGES THAT PEOPLE TAKE PART IN POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITIES. END UNCLAS

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2. IN INTERVIEW SAVIMBI IS SOMEWHAT VAGUE, RAMBLES AND OFTEN FAILS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS PUT BY INTERVIEWER. TONE IS OCCASIONALLY SLIGHTLY PARANOID AND SELF-PITYING BUT OTHERWISE SAVIMBI IN PRINT APPEARS A RATIONAL AND REALISTIC-SOUNDING LEADER.

3. SAVIMBI APPEARS TO BE INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED BY THE LACK OF LISBON GO-AHEAD FOR HIS EMERGENCE AS A "LEGAL" POLITICIAN. EXACTLY WHAT HE HAS REQUESTED IN THE WAY OF GUARANTEES IS UNCLEAR BUT IT APPEARS THE PROBLEM WITH HAVING THEM ACCEPTED IS IN LISBON, NOT AMONG MFA OFFICERS OR THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT HERE. AMONG THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS UNITA IS NOW REGARDED MOST FAVORABLY BY YOUNG PORTUGUESE OFFICERS BOTH BECAUSE OF SAVIMBI'S VERY PORTUGUESE ATTITUDE OF ESCHEWING OUTSIDE HELP/INTERFERENCE, AND FACT HE IS, AS ONE OFFICER PUT IT, AN "AUDACIOUS GAMBLER." FACT HE WAS LEAST OF THEIR PRE-COUP MILITARY PROBLEMS IS ALSO A FACTOR. PORTUGUESE WHITES HERE DO NOT HAVE SAME HATRED FOR UNITA THEY HAVE FOR FNLA OR FEAR OF MPLA. RATHER, JUST AS SAVIMBI SEEMS TO HAVE ADOPTED "SPINOLISM," SO HAVE MANY WHITES CONCLUDED SAVIMBI MAY OFFER ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO MPLA-TYPE FUTURE. BRIGGS

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